

Post-Scoping Discussion for Jasper Mountain

March 11, 2015

Purpose of Scoping

Scoping for a CE (Categorical Exclusion) is important to discover information that could point to the need for an EA (Environmental Assessment) or EIS (Environmental Impact Statement). Scoping is the means to identify the presence or absence of any extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further documentation in an EA or EIS. Scoping should also reveal any past, present or reasonably foreseeable future actions with the potential to create uncertainty over the significance of cumulative effects.

How Scoping Comments Were Considered

Responses to scoping were reviewed by the interdisciplinary team (ID team) to determine if issues were raised that demonstrated an extraordinary circumstance may exist or a significant effect may occur based on actions proposed for the project. Additionally, comments were also reviewed to determine if they identified a clear cause-effect relationship (issue/concern) and suggestions to remedy/re-design the proposed actions to address the issue/concern.

Considerations for Project Development Prior to Scoping

- **Vegetation Management/Fuels Activities:** Dropped units or revised unit boundaries based on concerns associated with goshawk, visuals/recreation, potential old growth and lack of heritage surveys.
- **Road Management Activities:** Identified “stewardship” road maintenance/reconstruction activities not associated with implementing the project in response to the need identified by local residents to improve road conditions and reduce existing or potential sources contributing sediment.

Considerations for Project Development Based on Scoping

NOTE: Bullets in *italics* below document items that need additional follow-up by the Forest Service after discussions at the public meeting.

- Add units dropped because of goshawk concerns and lack of heritage surveys and salvage trees downed or damaged by recent wind events
 - The responsible official decided not to add these units back in for the following reasons: 1) Units dropped for goshawk concerns totaled 125 acres and were all low priority for treatment except for one unit that was moderate priority; 2) Heritage surveys for approximately 500 acres would not likely start until mid-May and have potential to delay the project up to 6 months. Furthermore, except for a few units that were high priority for treatment, all units were low or moderate priority. Other units being treated in the same area (surrounding private property at north edge of the project area) will create effective breaks in the vegetation that will slow or alter the course of a potential wildfire. Not pursuing salvage as part of this project.
- Create more of a fire break along NFS Rd 416 by including additional thinning units .45 miles above the intersection with NFS Rd 334
 - This area would have to be cable logged due to the steepness of the terrain, making commercial thinning unfeasible. This was discussed during the field trip to the project area.
 - *Local residents requested that some kind of treatment be done at this location. They communicated if a commercial thin could not be accomplished that they would like to see something done to*

remove the dense vegetation and create a more effective fuels break along this section of an important ingress/egress route (NFS Rd 416). The Forest will revisit this site and determine what treatment would be appropriate and feasible.

- Use aggregates or skips in regeneration harvest units to reduce impacts to scenic integrity
 - Units 45 and 47 are of highest concern visually. The silviculturist, fire/fuels specialist and landscape architect are exploring opportunities and appropriateness of applying aggregates in these units.
 - *The landscape architect will be joining Backcountry Horsemen to visit the vista from the trail system that overlooks these two units. She will also be working with the silviculturist and layout crew to determine potential for and layout of aggregates/skips in these units.*
- Retain large trees as required by the Farm Bill and use diameters described by Green et al, 2011 to describe large tree retention prescriptions
 - The Farm Bill requires retention of large trees **to the extent that trees promote stands that are resilient to insect and disease**. Some large trees would be removed as retaining them would infect regenerated stands (e.g. larch infected with dwarf mistletoe in shelterwood or seedtree stands).
- Open NFS Rd 1300 (currently closed to public motorized use) since it will be improved as part of project implementation
 - Any changes made to the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) would be accomplished through a separate decision with a separate scoping period. The only roads proposed for decommissioning as part of this project are unclassified roads on Forest Service lands that are not part of the transportation system. No roads currently open to public motorized use are proposed for closure/storage.
- Use retained receipts to hook up some campgrounds and facilities to the Granite Reeder Sewer District
 - The Granite Reeder Sewer District is outside the Jasper Mountain project area and the nature of this work is outside the scope of this NEPA decision. Retained receipts could be used to pay for this work; however, receipts must be on hand before the work could be accomplished. It is not likely retained receipts from the Jasper Mountain project would be generated for several years. The Forest is exploring other options for accomplishing this administrative action.
- Consider and analyze effects to certain resources/species (e.g. big game winter range habitat, fisher, numerous bird and raptor species, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, sensitive plants etc.) and comply with law/regulation/policy
 - Effects to resource/species are already being analyzed and/or design features are already identified (as disclosed in the scoping letter) to reduce/eliminate impacts to said resource/species. No comments received in response to scoping indicated an extraordinary circumstance exists or that there is potential uncertainty over the significance of cumulative effects. All proposed activities must also be in compliance with law, regulation and policy (e.g. Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Act, National Forest Management Act, National Environmental Policy Act etc.), to include the Forest Plan (as revised, January 2015) and specialists will make these determinations as part of their analysis.
 - *Paul Sieracki believes units 107, 96 and 38 are old growth and should not be treated because they provide flammulated owl habitat. A silviculturist will review these units to determine if they meet old growth criteria, as defined by Green et al, 2011.*
 - *Paul also alleges activities are still being proposed in goshawk territory but when asked where this was would not provide the location.*
- Make specialist reports available for review to the public to reinforce trust and allay fears about using the Farm Bill
 - Specialist reports will be posted on the project webpage and findings will be discussed at the next public meeting (April 16th).

- Track efficacy of treatments over the course of decades: take before, during and after photos of treated areas over certain intervals (2, 5, 10, 20 and 30 years etc.); require follow up report documenting if the treatments achieved objectives; make a map that tracks all treatments; calculate potential mortality percentages after treatment on a regular basis.
 - Processes, tools, databases or standard operating procedures are already in place to accomplish all of these; however, the Forest Supervisor is open to ideas on implementing project-level monitoring efforts that provide meaningful, timely information and are time and cost effective. More discussion on monitoring requirements will take place at the next public meeting (April 16th).

Next Public Meeting

The next public meeting will be held at the Priest River Event Center (located at 5399 Highway 2) from 5:00-7:00pm on April 16, 2015. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss effects analysis findings and potential monitoring and/or mitigation needs during implementation.

Attendees

Forest Service Personnel: Erick Walker, District Ranger
 Carol McKenzie, Forest Vegetation Staff Officer
 Tera Little, Project Leader
 Morai Helfen, Landscape Architect

Jasper Mountain Meeting – March 11, 2015

Participant Sign-In Sheet

NAME/ORGANIZATION	EMAIL/ADDRESS (If not already on project mailing list)
Paul Stevack	
Karen Roetter/Senator	Mike Crapo's office
Mike Spitzer	
Jim MATZER	
Sid Smith - Sen. Jim Risch	
Brad Smith - ICL	
Jim Tully FOR DAVID ZANKER	
Jim Petersen Evergreen	
Meeting adjourned @ 6pm. The following individuals arrived after 6:	
Bob + Janet Elliot	
Jim Des Jarlais	
Paul Workman	